Grouping Strategies

Grouping decisions involve the size of the groups, who is in the group, the roles assigned to different group members, and the tasks assigned to the groups themselves.

Different project activities lend themselves to different grouping arrangements. Some activities may best be accomplished by students working by themselves. Other activities may lend themselves to students participating in pairs, in small groups, or as a whole class. Grouping decisions should reflect the nature of the activity and the learning goals envisioned. For example:

**Group Size Considerations**

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| --- | --- |
| **SIZE OF GROUP BEST USES** | |
| Individuals (students working alone) | Learning (and teaching) fundamental skills. Researching in the library or on the Web. |
| Pairs | Providing one-on-one feedback, editing, peer assessment Providing one-to-one support or training |
| Small Groups | **Working on tasks that have multiple dimensions or steps. Sharing perspectives or reaching consensus.** |
| Mid-Size Groups | Holding discussions, debates, role play activities |
| Whole Class | Presenting orientations, debriefings, progress checks |

The location of project activities also influences the size of groups. In many projects, each major activity might have a different location. For example:

**Potential Project Sites**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LOCATION USEFUL FOR** | |
| In-class | Orientation, coordination, group work, etc. |
| Home | Generating ideas, revising work, reading, note taking |
| Library | Research, reading, using technology |
| Other classroom | Presenting, getting feedback, gathering data |
| Community | Gathering data, observing, interviewing, collaborating |
| With mentor | Modeling, getting advice, getting feedback |
| With electronic partner | Collaborating, sharing information, getting feedback |